

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of all grounds of rejection are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Claims 1-18 were rejected. By entry of this amendment, claims 1, 3, 6, 8 and 17 have been amended. Claims 7, 9-16 and 18 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer and new claims 19-32 have been added. Consequently, claims 1-6, 8, 17 and 19-32 are pending.

The Examiner has objected to the disclosure because of several informalities in paragraphs 0006 and 0022. In response, the identified paragraphs have been replaced in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions. Therefore, withdraw of these objections is respectfully requested.

The Examiner has objected to the drawings because the reference numeral 85 included in paragraph 0026 is not shown. In response, paragraph 0026 has been replaced and no longer includes this reference character. The other objections made by the Examiner related to claims 7, 9, 15 and 17 are now moot as a result of amendments to the claims. Therefore, withdraw of these objections is respectfully requested.

Further, paragraphs 0028, 0030 and 0035 were also replaced to conform with changes made at the request of the Examiner in the prosecution of related application, Serial Number 10/707,528, entitled "Adjustable Width Coupler Latch Lock" and filed December 19, 2003.

Claim 12 was objected to by the Examiner because of various informalities. This claim has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Therefore, this rejection is now moot.

Claim 1 is directed to a receiver lock for securing an object to a receiver. The lock includes a linear shaft and a locking head having a shaft insertion end and a key insertion end. The insertion end is selectively coupled to a first end of the shaft. A second end of the shaft is disengaged from the locking head. A stop member is located at the second opposite end of the

shaft. As described in para. 0002 of the specification and shown in Figures 5-6, these types of locks are assembled by users to secure various hardware to a trailer or vehicle, e.g., a ball mount to a receiver or coupler. Locks of this type inherently include two primary pieces, a shaft and a locking body. To begin application, each piece is securely held on opposing sides of the receiver, either by hand or in a tool. The shaft is inserted through four aligning holes in the receiver and ball mount and engaged to the locking body. Any type of one-piece conventional padlock is unsuitable for use in this application.

Claim 1 further recites a protective covering partially enclosing an axial length of the locking head and located on the shaft insertion end of the locking head. Only partially enclosing the locking head allows metal to metal contact for a securing tool as previously described. For example, a vise grip can be used to hold the locking head between the protective covering and a cap covering the key insertion end. As a result, the elastomeric material of the protective covering is not damaged by the tool. The protective covering is also compressible between the locking head and the receiver.

US Patent 5,156,029 to Heald (hereinafter “Heald”) is directed to a padlock suitable for conventional use, such as to secure hinged doors. (Heald, col. 1, line 26). Heald does not teach or suggest a receiver lock device having a linear shaft, or a shaft having a second end that is disengaged from a locking head. Rather, Heald is directed to a padlock 20 having a “U-shaped two rung hasp 28 extending up from body 24.” (Heald, col. 3, lines 16-17). Only one end of the hasp 28 can be disengaged from the body 24. Further, Heald teaches a lock body 24 completely enclosed in a cover 30 comprising a relatively thin, flexible, resilient two piece casing of material such as synthetic rubber or elastomeric plastic, or polyurethane plastic. (Heald, col. 1, lines 18-21). The cap 58 cited by the Examiner is in addition to this cover 30. As a result, Heald does not teach or suggest a receiver lock having a protective covering partially enclosing an axial length of the locking head. Still further, Heald does not teach or suggest a protective covering compressible between the body 24 and the receiver. The cap 58 identified by the Examiner as a protective coating is not under compression forces between the body 24 and a receiver while in engagement with the hasp 28. The cap 58 in application is clearly illustrated in Figure 8. For at least these reasons, Heald does not anticipate claim 1 and claim 1 is allowable.

US 2005/0000255 A1 to Wyers (hereinafter “Wyers”) is directed to a locking device

having a flanged seal. The locking device includes a shank portion 20, adapted to engage a locking head 40 as seen in Figures 9-11. Wyers does not teach or suggest a receiver lock having protective covering partially enclosing an axial length of the locking head 40. As shown clearly in the Figures 9-11, the locking head 40 is entirely enclosed by a cylindrical skirt 82. Any tool used to engage the locking head 40 would contact with skirt 82. For at least this reason, Wyers does not anticipate claim 1 and claim 1 is allowable.

Therefore, withdraw of all rejections relative to claim 1 are respectfully requested.

Dependent claim 6 recites a protective cap selectively attachable to an external groove in an end of the locking head opposite the protective covering. (para. 0035, lines 10-12).

Dependent claim 8 recites a protective covering including a portion of the same diameter as a cylindrical outer peripheral surface of the locking head. (see Figures 8A-8B). Neither Heald nor Wyers teach, suggest, or disclose either of these two features. Therefore, claims 6 and 7 are also allowable.

Claim 17 is directed to a receiver lock for securing a ball mount to a receiver. The lock includes a linear shaft, a locking head having a shaft insertion end and a key insertion end, the insertion end selectively coupled to a first end of the shaft, and a stop member located at a second opposite end of the shaft. The lock includes a protective covering partially enclosing an axial length of the locking head. The protective covering includes a portion of the same diameter as a cylindrical outer peripheral surface of the locking head.

For at least the same reasons discussed above in regard to claim 1, Heald does not teach, disclose or suggest a receiver lock having a linear shaft, or a receiver lock having a protective covering partially enclosing an axial length of the locking head. Consequently, Heald also does not anticipate claim 17.

For at least the same reasons discussed above in regard to claim 1, Wyers does not teach, disclose or suggest a receiver lock having a protective covering partially enclosing an axial length of the locking head. Consequently, Wyers also does not anticipate claim 17.

Therefore, claim 17 is allowable and withdraw of all rejections relative to claim 17 are respectfully requested.

New independent claim 25 is directed a receiver lock assembly and reads as follows:

25. (new) A receiver lock assembly comprising:

a linear shaft having a first end with an external circumferential recess and a second end having a stop member;

a locking mechanism including a lock housing, a lock cylinder fixed within said housing, a rotatable cam engaged to said lock cylinder, and a locking plate coupled to said cam, wherein said locking plate is selectively coupled to said external recess of said first end of a shaft; and

a shaft protective cover located on the outside of said shaft, wherein said protective covering is disposed between said lock housing and said stop member.

With reference to Figures 7A-7B, claim 25 recites “a protective cover located on the outside of the shaft.” The protective cover 140 acts as a barrier between the shaft 30 and the surface of the object to which the receiver lock 10 is applied. (para. 0036, lines 2-4). As recited in dependent claims 28 and 29, the cover 140 may vary, such as for example, a coating or a piece of stainless steel. An example of such as stainless steel cylindrical cover is an adapter for use to increase the radius of the shaft for different applications. (para. 0032, lines 2-4).

Neither Heald nor Wyers teach, suggest, or disclose a receiver lock having a protective cover located on the outside of a shaft. For at least this reason, neither Heald nor Wyers anticipate claim 25 and claim 25 is allowable.

Therefore, the undersigned respectfully requests consideration and allowance of claim 25.

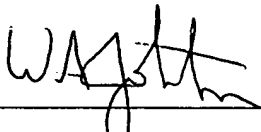
Independent claim 10 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Therefore, all rejections of this claim, and dependent claims 11-16, are now moot.

As stated, independent claim 25 is new and is believed to be allowable. Further, the remaining pending dependent claims are allowable at least based on direct or indirect dependence on allowable independent claims 1, 17 and 25.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims of this application are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, a Notice of Allowance for all pending claims of this application is respectfully solicited. Furthermore, if the Examiner believes that additional discussions or information might advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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